



BRICS LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT MINISTERS' MEETING

September 20th, 2019
Brasilia, Brazil

Introduction

1. We, the Ministers of Labour and Employment from the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Russian Federation, the Republic of India, the People's Republic of China and the Republic of South Africa, met in Brasilia on 19-20 September, for the fifth BRICS Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting (LEMM). The primary purpose of our meeting was to strengthen coordination, and information sharing, discuss and agree upon specific areas of cooperation to address labour and employment challenges faced commonly by BRICS member countries.

2. We acknowledge the progress made and improved collaboration between our countries since the first meeting held in Ufa, Russia in 2015. We recognise the efforts of the member countries to continue sharing knowledge and developing cooperation on labour and employment, social security, and strengthening social dialogue.

3. We reaffirm our support to the principles outlined in the 2018 Durban Declaration including the collaboration through the signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to promote mutual collaboration in the social and labour spheres. We further reaffirm our call for the Labour and Employment Working Group to align its work with other streams to improve coherence and coordination.

4. We recognize that the future of work brings significant challenges and opportunities for the BRICS countries. We underline the importance of working together to develop policies and strategies to respond to the emerging challenges and opportunities, while acknowledging ILO's human-centred approach as called for in the ILO Centenary Declaration.



5. We agree that it is critical to build resilient and adaptable labour markets to enable governments, employers and workers to manage the transition with minimal disruptions while they take advantage of and expand the potential benefits offered by globalization, digitization and demographic change.

6. In consideration of these issues, we convened under the theme “BRICS: economic growth for an innovative future” discussed and addressed the following priority areas proposed to support the objectives advocated by that the theme: Inclusive Future of Work; Trade Liberalization and the Impact on the BRICS Labour Market; Governance of Labour Market Data; and Promoting Quality and Productive Employment for a Sustainable Social Security System.

7. We welcome the work undertaken by the BRICS Network of Labour Research Institutes resulting in a comparative analysis of key issues regarding the BRICS countries’ labour market challenges and policy experiences. We acknowledge the work performed by the Institutes on new forms of employment and on youth employment, which highlights the importance of a comprehensive strategy in order to tackle the structural challenges of our labour markets. We also welcome the launch of the BRICS Virtual Liaison Office with the technical assistance of ISSA in collaboration with the ILO as a practical mechanism to support activities and the BRICS Social Security Cooperation Framework.

Inclusive Future of Work

8. The discussion on Inclusive Future of Work proposed dealing with the transformations in the world of work arising from the rapid changes the world is witnessing. Global megatrends such as globalization, technological innovation, climate change and demographic change are profoundly changing the nature of work in terms of the type of jobs created, the skills needed for those jobs, and the organization of work. These trends are challenging the traditional labour market and social policies, and we recognize that they require a new rationale to help navigate and shape the new world of work.



9. Acknowledging that work holds collective significance for social cohesion, the way in which we organise work and labour markets plays a major role in determining the quality of life for all. We recall the 2030 Agenda's call for "leaving no one behind" and placing decent work at the core of policies to achieve social justice for sustainable and inclusive growth.

10. Facing the future of work, we need to find adequate responses to the challenges imposed. The ILO Centenary Declaration on the Future of Work, adopted last June and marking the 100th anniversary of the ILO, provides us with important guidance on how to achieve an inclusive future of work. We endorse the ILO's approach that places people and the work they do at the centre of economic and social policy as well as business practice, a human-centred agenda for the future of work.

11. We recognize the importance of strengthening the institutions of work to ensure adequate protection of all workers, especially those engaged in new forms of employment and in informal work in BRICS Countries.

12. Driven by these trends, the future of work offers unprecedented opportunities as new technologies and new markets create new, more productive jobs. We reaffirm the need to improve the national labour law system and the international labour standards, as well as their implementation mechanisms, in order to address the challenges brought by informal employment and new forms of employment, as we agreed in the BRICS Common Position on Governance in the Future of Work. In this line, we recognize the need for continuous adaptation of labour laws and government policies.

Trade Liberalization and the Impact on the BRICS Labour Market

13. International trade has the potential to boost economic output for any country depending on the ability of the country to maximize the benefits of importing and exporting products and services. The established BRICS countries'



relations bears this potential and we note the possible effects on employment generation, income distribution and the reduction of poverty.

14. With this in mind, we recognize the benefits and concerns in trade liberalization and the need to respond through active labour markets policies and skills programmes, so that workers can ensure their employability by acquiring new skills for sectors that benefit from the opening of the economy, subject to national circumstances.

15. Taking the above into consideration, we draw upon the expertise of the BRICS Network of Labour Research Institutes to prepare a discussion document to assess the impact of trade liberalization on labour markets of the BRICS countries, with due consideration of the different national circumstances.

Governance of Labour Market Data

16. The development and execution of processes, architectures, and policies, inevitably increase the importance of ICT in supporting transparent, objective, comparable and compatible data. Amidst a growing necessity of turning data into information that can be useful, accountability, consolidation and efficiency have become important to enable decision making for labour markets.

17. We acknowledge the need to handle quality data from various sources to rationalize and simplify the fulfilment of labour and social security rights and obligations, to eliminate redundancy and to increase synergy in the information provided by individuals and companies by strengthening and improving existing datasets to facilitate the implementation of public policies.

18. We will continue to make efforts for access to and the sharing of data as a matter of priority in order to foster cooperation in labour-related matters, to inform policy makers and to support relevant labour market research.



Promoting Quality and Productive Employment for a Sustainable Social Security System

19. Universal and sustainable social security systems, including social protection floors, are an integral part of our policies to promote inclusive growth, quality and productive employment, gender equality and social cohesion. Demographic change poses a significant challenge to social security systems.

20. With that challenge in mind, it is crucial to design and implement policies that will ensure adequate and sustainable social security system, without compromising the rights of those protected and covered by the system. We believe that policy reforms to adapt social security systems to new demographic realities should include the promotion of formal employment, so as to guarantee the financial, fiscal and economic sustainability of the system with due respect for social justice and equity for the present and future generations.

Way Forward

21. We reinforce the importance of the partnership with the International Labour Organization and its International Training Centre in supporting the BRICS Network and encourage the continuity of the implementation of capacity building, exchange of information initiatives and the development of joint publications. We welcome the theme on skills demand and supply in the context of the future of work in 2019/2020.

22. We will make optimal use of the Virtual Liaison Office, with the technical assistance from the ILO and the ISSA, to draft and implement the periodic action plan of the BRICS Social Security Cooperation Framework.

23. We will take the content of this Declaration to the knowledge of our Leaders' consideration as they strive to deepen cooperation to promote common



development and strengthen the governance of data to address challenges jointly.

24. We express gratitude to the technical partners such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Social Security Association (ISSA) for their contributions in supporting BRICS collaboration and this particular meeting. We will continue our close cooperation with these and other international organizations.

25. Finally, we would like to show our sincerest appreciation to the Brazilian Presidency for organizing the Employment Working Group meeting and the Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting in Brasilia, September 2019. We look forward to our next meeting under the Presidency of the Russian Federation in 2020.